

Extraordinary 821

[Chapter 821](#)

“Buzz off!”

The subordinate immediately turned and left.

The empty room fell silent once again.

After a while, another subordinate suddenly rushed in and reported, “Mr. Silvermoon, Lucas is flying a plane personally to help with the rescue. Lochlan's fire engine had also arrived at the scene.”

Silvermoon sneered, “So what? The fire spread long ago, and not even God could save them now.”

Meanwhile, the temperature had risen significantly in Imperial Hotel.

Howard was trembling as he was choking on the smoke. His throat was burning, and he was in pain.

Yet, he had just carried a colleague out again with difficulty. The quilt on his body was scorched by the fire, and it was barely protecting him from the fire.

However, he couldn't bear to take it off. At that point, he got so tired and dropped to the ground as he gasped for air.

Suddenly, Howard heard a series of footsteps coming his way. His eyes lit up, and he stood up abruptly. “Who's there? Are there firefighters nearby? We're here!”

Right then, he heard a cracking sound. A piece of security door was damaged by the fire, and it was falling down from above.

He then looked up frightenedly and saw the door falling from right above.

At the most critical moment, an agile figure came in from the window of the corridor and kicked away the security door that was on fire.

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Howard raised his gaze and saw a familiar figure dressed in a hospital gown.

"Lyn?" Howard was in shock.

He then quickly regained his composure and realized that Ashlyn had a soaked sheet over her body. The sheet was so wet that water was dripping down onto the floor. Still, he couldn't help but yell, "It's dangerous here! Leave now!"

Ashlyn turned around and shot him a cold glance. After that, she looked at the unconscious Imperial Hotel employees behind him. "I know all these people!"

She smirked and uttered coldly, "Howard, how are you still conscious when all of them had passed out? I think you owe me an explanation."

Howard's face, which had blackened by the thick smoke, suddenly turned pale. "Lyn, I—"

"I hope that you can give me a valid explanation." Ashlyn shot Howard an icy look and shouted at the red helicopter outside the building, "Send some men in here to rescue these people!"

A few bulky men jumped in from the red helicopter and brought the unconscious employees toward the window.

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A few bulky men jumped in from the red helicopter and brought the unconscious employees toward the window.

They were moving very swiftly because it was a race against time.

"Once you guys have rescued the people on this floor, go upstairs!" Ashlyn instructed. Upon hearing that, the bulky men carried out her order.

Those men were deft and quick. It was as if they were trained soldiers.

The staff hostel was divided into two floors. Thus, the upper floor was also filled with hotel employees. The customers, on the other hand, were all on the other floors. The firefighters were rescuing the customers first because that was Imperial Hotel's policy.

Ashlyn wanted to rescue her employees on her own.

Although she was dressed in a hospital gown, her presence was still rather imposing.

Even though she suffered from injuries to her arm and forehead, it was as if she couldn't feel a thing.

As she was going through the rooms with Howard, the fire was burning fiercely. However, she was calm and collected.

At the same time, Howard was feeling incredibly guilty. This is all my fault. I'm the reason why Imperial Hotel is on fire. I've also put my beloved colleagues' lives at risk. W-What am I going to do?

Bang!

Suddenly, another loud bang rang out. Due to the raging fire, a beam on that floor had collapsed.

[Chapter 822](#)

A rumbling sound started, and the rest of the crumbling wall rained down from above ceaselessly, hitting the ground hard.

Dodging, Ashlyn went from room to room.

She was like an Amazon in the midst of a blazing fire, advancing relentlessly.

When they had finally reached the floor above, much to their dismay, they discovered that several employees had suffocated to death from the thick smoke.

Meanwhile, Luigi and the others were carrying the bodies of those employees out.

“There's no saving them, Boss.”

“I understand.” A trace of sorrow marred Ashlyn's face as a wave of grief swelled within her. They... They were all brothers and sisters to me.

A while later, she composed herself and instructed, “Make their funerals a grand one and compensate their families.”

Right then, Lucas was piloting a plane, circling non-stop in the sky.

When an aircraft maintained a low altitude for a long time, the airflow at the leading edges would be obstructed as the relative airflow streamed past the wings, causing a decrease in velocity and an increase in pressure. At the same time, the airflow at the trailing edges would be disconnected, forming vortices and reducing the pressure. Following that, the pressure difference between the front and rear of the wings created resistance.

In turn, it brought about a great degree of danger.

The sum of resistance generated by the various components of the plane, including the wings, fuselage, tail, and the like from the airflow in isolation, didn't match the sum of resistance generated on the whole. Instead, it tended to be less than the resistance generated when the components were taken as a whole.

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Thanks to everyone's combined efforts, the inferno gradually died down.

Lucas' eyes were bloodshot after having used his eyes for such a long time, coupled with the lack of sleep for an entire night.

When he received the signal from the fire chief, he headed the plane back to the captain at long last, shifting back to the co-pilot seat. He let out a long exhalation.

"What do we do now, Mr. Nolen?"

"Send me to the ground. I want to return to my wife."

Lucas closed his eyes, a hint of weariness apparent in his voice.

At that moment, Ashlyn was still going from floor to floor, searching for survivors who might have slipped through the net.

Everywhere was scorched black. It was a heartbreaking sight that struck beholders with a sense of suffocation.

All of a sudden, a burst of gunfire split the air.

On the heels of that, a rumbling sound rang out.

The first rays of dawn streamed through the broken windows. Rubble littered the room, and the light bulbs overhead had all been burned to a crisp. The entire room was beyond recognition.

In the darkness, a figure stood in the middle of the room silently, staring at Ashlyn motionlessly.

He held a gun in his hand. His eyes were calm and icy, and a mask concealed his face.

"Ashlyn."

In the dark and quiet room, the man's voice was exceedingly soft, sounding just like a whisper.

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In the dark and quiet room, the man's voice was exceedingly soft, sounding just like a whisper.

His voice carried infinite yearning and nostalgia as well as a smidge of resentment.

Trudging on the charred ground, he headed toward Ashlyn in the corridor.

Howard instinctively moved to stand before Ashlyn. Wariness was written all over his face. “What are you trying to do, Silvermoon? I'll never let you off the hook if you dare hurt her!”

The man's lips curved into a sneer, his tall figure as formidable as ever.

With a swing of his hand, he sent Howard flying to the wall on the opposite side.

Ashlyn quirked a brow. Howard... is actually a weakling before him?

“Are you two putting on a double act in front of me?”

She cast a glance at Howard, who coughed up blood. “One infiltrated Imperial Hotel for years on end, going as far as pretending to be dull-witted to gain my trust while the other ruined Imperial Hotel, my lifeblood. What is your motive? What do you both hope to obtain from me? Is there a grudge between us?”

The look in her eyes was frosty despite the scorched hospital gown on her that hung loosely, rendering her all the more emaciated.

Howard's face paled, and he gaped at her in disbelief. “Y-You know everything?”

“Ever since you demanded that I deliver my jewelry back then, I'd been suspecting that it was you. My suspicions were confirmed when Dr. Walker told me that you were running a fever, for he had been keeping an eye on you. He noticed the coppery smell of blood and the contents of the trash can in your room.”

[Chapter 823](#)

Ashlyn regarded Howard coldly. “I never expected you to be a member of ZZ Organization. Why did you infiltrate Imperial Hotel? I'd been waiting for you all to make a move, but never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that you'd sabotage Imperial Hotel. Did the employees here not treat you well, Howard? How could you callously make a move against them?”

Every single word out of her mouth carried intense recrimination.

Howard felt so guilty that he didn't quite dare look her in the eye.

He lowered his eyes, pain etched across his striking features.

“Lyn... that wasn't what happened... I can explain.”

“I'm not here to listen to you two confronting each other.” Silvermoon's cool voice abruptly rang out. He aimed the gun in his hand right between Ashlyn's eyes. “You're really an eyesore to be alive. How about... I send you to meet your maker?”

A hint of devilish allure adorned his gaze. With his long legs, he made for a tall and imposing figure.

Despite standing amidst the rubble, he still resembled an elegant nobleman without a trace of dirt sullying him.

It had others gripped by the urge to remove the mask covering his face for a look at his countenance beneath.

"The members of ZZ Organization are nothing more than a bunch of scaredy-cats, having no guts to face others with your real self. The same goes for both you and Howard."

Ashlyn's heart twisted painfully.

She once poured out genuine affection toward Howard, taking care of him like he was a five-year-old kid.

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When she heard from Jim that not only was Howard running a fever, but he also found bloody cotton swabs and gauze in the trash can in the latter's room, she was basically certain that the man who had delivered her favorite jewelry was Howard.

Besides, he was the only person who would ask about such a private matter as her favorite jewelry.

In the past four years of her marriage, Lucas gifted her many gifts, including jewelry.

In fact, they were numerous beyond number.

However, Lucas merely regarded it as accomplishing a mission back then.

He didn't put any emotions into it. For that reason, he and other men, such as Jared and the rest, would never ask her a question pertaining to her jewelry.

Other than the jewelry Howard gifted her that she expressed her liking for, her subordinates like Jared and Luigi usually gifted her cars, guns, deers, and the like.

They never gave her any jewelry.

Thus, the only explanation was the presence of a mole.

In the end, the mole was suspected to be Howard.

She had been using herself as bait, for she thought that they wanted her life.

Never had she thought that they actually wanted the lives of everyone at Imperial Hotel.

How could they be so ruthless?

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“How shameless, cruel, and heartless are you all that you burned this place down when so many lives were at stake?”

“How long-winded! Do you think everyone is as naïve as you? What's righteousness? And what's kindness? All those are just textbook teachings to entertain kids! Do you not know that?”

Cackling maniacally, Silvermoon pulled the trigger without warning.

A bang pierced the air as a bullet whizzed through the air, heading straight for the space between Ashlyn's eyes.

“No! Watch out!” Howard roared.

He threw himself at Ashlyn.

At that precise moment, Ashlyn suddenly frowned. Shifting sideways, she agilely moved to dodge the bullet, only to be restrained by Howard.

The man was strong, so he kept her locked in his arms.

Ashlyn shoved at him furiously. “What are you doing, Howard?”

It would have been a piece of cake for her to dodge the bullet considering her skills.

Howard was just about to speak, but the instant he opened his mouth, crimson blood trickled out the

corner of his mouth.

He finally couldn't hold back, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

“Howard? You're shot?”

Ashlyn gaped at him in shock.

He... He took the bullet for me? Was that it? Did he lose his mind or something?

“Lyn... I'm willing to pay the corresponding price for everything I've done. I just hope that you... can... can...”

[Chapter 824](#)

Right then, Howard's azure blue eyes resembled the dawn sky outside the window.

He gazed at Ashlyn with a melancholic expression on his face. “Can forgive me...”

Ashlyn hurriedly stood up. At once, she was greeted by the sight of crimson blood gushing out of his back at the position of the heart.

The blood stained his clothes red. His face grew increasingly paler, and his breathing increasingly weaker.

Silvermoon sneered, “Death is a fitting end for you, Howard, you traitor. But... what a pity, Ashlyn! I only fire one shot a day. It's your gain today.”

After saying that, he spun on his heel and left.

Ashlyn stared at Howard, who was dying in her arms. She didn't have any time to bother about Silvermoon, who was leaving.

She felt for her phone to call Luigi and the others over, but she didn't find her phone in her pocket.

D*mn it! Where's my phone?

Gritting her teeth, she had no choice but to carry Howard on her back and laboriously plodded out.

“Hang in there, Howard! I'm going to get you out of here right now! I don't like to owe anyone anything. I don't even want to owe someone a favor, let alone a life, so hang in there!”

“You... are still willing to save me?” Howard murmured weakly, blood spilling out of his mouth once more.

His tall body was draped over Ashlyn's skinny back. His mind felt exceedingly sluggish, and he was both sleepy and tired.

It was as though he had returned to the day when he first met her.

She stood at the entrance of the orphanage; her cool voice threaded with a hint of warmth that gave off a sense of amicability. "I've taken over this orphanage. All the kids here will be going to my training camp henceforth. I want to establish a hotel and make it the biggest establishment in Lake City! I want every child to have food and a job, becoming useful individuals to society."

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It was her... Everything was because of her. Imperial Hotel existed because of her, and all of us stayed here. Later... Later, she took over several more orphanages that couldn't continue operating. She painstakingly nurtured all the children, and they all obtained new lives... because of her. Meanwhile, I was a pawn placed in the orphanage by ZZ Organization. I'm tired, so very exhausted...

All these years, he watched as everyone around him grew up, all responding to Ashlyn's hopes for them.

They all served patrons and contributed to society. Furthermore, many of them became outstanding figures in various industries.

Perhaps they weren't as strong and talented as Ashlyn, but they weren't too bad either.

Howard recalled how he obtained Ashlyn's blessings when he obtained the highest award in the culinary industry.

Also, his mind went back to everyone's excitement when Imperial Hotel was set as the benchmark for the hotel industry in Leke City.

Then, flashbacks of Ashlyn gifting all the employees a thoughtful birthday present on their birthdays came to him.

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Then, flashbacks of Ashlyn gifting all the employees a thoughtful birthday present on their birthdays came to him.

He recalled everyone's happiness when Ashlyn kept them company during each festival.

Memories began playing back in his mind.

There were too many to be counted.

By then, he could barely breathe. "I... I'm sorry."

"You don't need to apologize for having saved me. Just hang in there, d*mn it!" Ashlyn dragged herself out with Howard on her back. Every so often, the man's rapid and heavy breathing sounded beside her ear.

It's near. We're getting out soon...

As she kept trudging forward, she prayed for Luigi and the others to appear.

Finally, she reached the entrance to the safety passage. As soon as she lifted her eyes, she spotted Lucas striding toward her in black.

Delight showed on her face. "Quick, Lucas!"

No sooner had her voice rang out than she perceptively sensed the breathing by her ear ceasing abruptly. Howard's hand that had been clutching at her collar also dropped weakly.

In a flash, the smile on her face froze.

It stilled right there.

A long while later, a drop of tear rolled down her cheek.

In the end, it fell to the blackened ground.

Lucas eyed Howard, who had his eyes closed on Ashlyn's back, no longer breathing.

Ashlyn felt a weight lifted off her back as Lucas took Howard away from her. In the next heartbeat, the man's low voice drifted into her ears. "He's no longer breathing."

[Chapter 825](#)

At that moment, blood had painted Ashlyn's back bright red, making for a ghastly sight.

There was so much blood that it dripped down her clothes.

Her heart was seemingly encased in a bottomless abyss of ice, making her so cold that she shivered. With red-rimmed eyes, she murmured in a hoarse voice, "You know what, Howard? I've always regarded you as my brother. I never expected my brother to die in the end in a bid to save me."

Then, she turned to Lucas. "He was the traitor, Lucas. He was the mole in Imperial Hotel."

Ashlyn looked at the handsome man before her aggrievedly.

Snapping, she threw herself into Lucas' warm embrace.

"He has paid the corresponding price. You and Imperial Hotel both mattered to him. Otherwise, he wouldn't have carried so many employees to the safety passage."

Lucas patted her on the back gently, comforting her.

Rumble!

Out of the blue, a deafening rumble sounded from the roof above them.

Lucas lifted his eyes and glanced at the roof that was seconds from collapsing. "We need to leave immediately."

A loud bang rang out as a piece of charred shingle grazed past Lucas' shoulder and smashed onto the ground hard.

Hugging Ashlyn, he spun around and ducked.

Alas, that gigantic piece of shingle separated Howard from them.

"Howard!" Ashlyn cried out.

She wanted to sprint over and take Howard's body away.

Unfortunately, the entire building shook, on the verge of collapse.
At that moment, blood had painted Ashlyn's neck bright red, making for a ghastly sight.

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"Bring him along, Lucas! Bring him with us!" Ashlyn gazed at him pleadingly. Clenching his jaw, Lucas was just about to leap over when a huge piece of crumbling wall fell from above.

It blocked his path off completely.

Just then, Luigi started urging from the rescue helicopter outside the window, "Come on, Boss!"

"Come on! You'll die otherwise!"

Ashlyn stared at Howard's cold body with red-rimmed eyes.

She closed her eyes, her heart clenching painfully.

"Let's go!" Scooping her up, Lucas whirled around and left.

The very second he did so, the entire building behind him crashed to the ground, turning into a pile of rubble. A great cloud of dust flew into the air, the sight horrifying.

"What's the point of bringing his body out when he's already dead?" Ashlyn sat in the helicopter, gazing out at the blue sky blankly.

The sunset was vivid and vibrant.

It seemingly wiped off everything that transpired in the dark.

Some people had to rest in peace forever, while others still had to forge ahead.

She stared at the wreckage that was Imperial Hotel from afar.

I believe that righteousness will defeat evil one day!

The matter about Imperial Hotel caused a great stir both within and outside of the country.

After all, a majestic building collapsed overnight.

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It blocked his path off completely.

Just then, Luigi started urging from the rescue helicopter outside the window, "Come on, Boss!"

“Come on! You'll die otherwise!”

Ashlyn stared at Howard's cold body with red-rimmed eyes.

She closed her eyes, her heart clenching painfully.

“Let's go!” Scooping her up, Lucas whirled around and left.

The very second he did so, the entire building behind him crashed to the ground, turning into a pile of rubble. A great cloud of dust flew into the air, the sight horrifying.

“What's the point of bringing his body out when he's already dead?” Ashlyn sat in the helicopter, gazing out at the blue sky blankly.

The sun at dawn was vivid and vibrant.

It seemingly wiped off everything that transpired in the dark.

Some people had to rest in peace forever, while others still had to forge ahead.

She stared at the wreckage that was Imperial Hotel from afar.

I believe that righteousness will defeat evil one day!

The matter about Imperial Hotel caused a great stir both within and outside of the country.

After all, a majestic building collapsed overnight.

What was more, Imperial Hotel was a landmark of Lake City.

Many influencers went there, as did some tourists who went there for vacation.

On the third day after the fire at Imperial Hotel, Imperial Hotel issued a statement.

It read: Imperial Hotel will be rebuilt, and we will return stronger. Imperial Hotel suffered massive losses in the fire this time, but it doesn't mean that we're going to withdraw from Lake City henceforth. Our queen, Ms. Berry, will continue to lead us as we ride above the storm. Do look forward to the return of Imperial Hotel!

It was a brief and simple statement, but it caused an uproar.

Someone posted: Oh my God, what did I just see? Our queen, Ms. Berry? Are they referring to my idol, Ashlyn?

The response read: It must be Ashlyn! I heard that someone caught sight of her during the rescue yesterday.

Another person added: At that time, Lucas was even personally piloting a plane at a low altitude to rescue the survivors! How cool!

Then, someone else countered: Imperial Hotel didn't tag Ashlyn. So, it's probably not referring to her. Could it be some other Ms. Berry?

To that, someone answered: If I remember correctly... the granddaughter of the Count's family, Penelope, is also Ms. Berry.

Another person echoed: Yes, exactly! Could it be some other Ms. Berry? There are many people in this world with the family name Berry. It's definitely not Ashlyn.

[Chapter 826](#)

All the netizens broke out in a heated debate.

Meanwhile, Lucas and Ashlyn flew back to Maredania.

It didn't matter how lively it was at Lake City with all the rowdy voices or how Lake City Daily praised Lucas to the skies on TikTok and Twitter for piloting a plane and saving lives.

Right that moment, they were sitting at a small round table under the vines, drinking coffee with Ian.

Ian quirked an eyebrow. "So, it seems that Imperial Hotel is your property, Ashlyn? I never knew that you were so capable."

The wound on Ashlyn's forehead had healed considerably, and new flesh had grown. She calmly took a sip of the coffee in her hand. "It's just a hotel."

"How modest of you, Ashlyn." Ian chuckled, turning his gaze to Lucas. "You're impressive, too. You can even pilot a plane, and quite well at that."

"It turns out that you're actually too free today and are especially teasing us? I've still got something else to do, so please excuse me." Ashlyn put the coffee in her hand down.

Ian stared at her back. "Come in. I'll continue treating you, but you're not to simply leave again next time."

Lucas said nothing. He merely placed his coffee down and followed the man into the house.

At the gates of the Jaquin residence in Lake City, a young man with injuries littering his body knelt under the scorching sun.

A layer of sweat blanketed his face, but his eyes radiated an innate sense of obstinacy.

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He had been kneeling there for a whole day and night.

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Winsor stood by the window on the second floor of the mansion.

His butler walked over and looked out the window at the young man kneeling at the gates with worry written all over his face. He anxiously cautioned, "Mr. Winsor, if Mr. Tinsor were to continue kneeling, his legs would end up impaired!"

"So be it! He shall kneel until he learns his lesson!"

Winsor then snubbed out the cigarette in his hand in disappointment, fury showing on his chiseled face.

He barked, "He's a descendant of the Jaquin family, yet he actually got himself kidnapped, stuffed into a burlap sack, and left at the gates of the mansion! How humiliating! Not only was he beaten to a pulp, but he also caused Ashlyn to suffer an injury and Imperial Hotel to be destroyed! If it weren't for him having been captured thanks to his paltry martial art skills and used as a bargaining chip to threaten Luces, the many terrifying things subsequently wouldn't have happened. This time, Ashlyn and Luces were lucky to escape. What if there's a next time?"

The butler sighed. "Mr. Winsor, Mr. Tinsor is still young, after all. As such, it's inevitable that he got duped. Besides, he has been interning with Heddock Group alongside the youngest son of the Nolen family. Is Dixon Heddock that easy to get along with? I can't shake off the feeling that this matter has something to do with Heddock Group."

"You're right." Winsor's expression was icy. He lifted his eyes and cast a look at Tinsor, who was still kneeling at the gates with his back straight. Subsequently, he ordered, "Send a few men out to investigate this matter. Also, send someone to inform Ashlyn about Heddock Group's financial issue Tinsor mentioned."

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"I think Mr. Blair would have already told her about it. Should we still do the same?"

The butler looked at the man hesitantly.

"That's their matter. It's different coming from us." Winsor's chiseled face was devoid of emotion, but his heart twisted in pain time and again.

At the thought that Ashlyn and Lucas were married, especially, he couldn't help feeling devastated.

Worse still, Ashlyn was injured because of Tinsor and Blair. That aside, Imperial Hotel was ruined.

I'm such a failure!

He suddenly felt utterly ashamed and couldn't bring himself to face Ashlyn.

Meanwhile, in a dilapidated castle in Maredania, Luigi stood in front of Ashlyn while Jared sat beside the latter, scrolling through his phone.

The atmosphere in the main hall was a touch tense.

Ashlyn sat on the couch with her long and slender legs crossed. She wore a white shirt and a pair of blue jeans. The front hem of her shirt was tucked into the waistband, rendering her waist all the slender.

"Dixon is luring me into a trap. This news is undoubtedly fake. Furthermore, I was tricked to the abandoned factory in succession, and someone from ZZ Organization intervened in the end," she sneered.

[Chapter 827](#)

"Verily, this makes Dixon and ZZ Organization's relationship exceedingly suspicious. I'm afraid... that this matter isn't that simple."

"Mr. Blair said he and Tinsor overheard the conversation between Dixon and Sienna and even have a recording of it." While saying that, Jared found the recording on his phone and played it for Ashlyn.

Arching an eyebrow, Ashlyn listened for some time before motioning for him to turn it off.

"So, Dixon has a shipment of smuggled goods and wants to sell it to someone else this Sunday. Moreover, he wants to make the deal in the Heavenly Waterfall Room under Haddock Group? Haha, he even said that Haddock Group's financials are riddled with holes because they embezzled company funds."

Ashlyn's eyes brimmed with disdain as she continued, "Such claims can only fool those two kids. The holes in Haddock Group's financials aren't because of the so-called embezzlement of company funds. Instead, it's because there's something fishy about their charitable organization."

"What should we do now, Boss? We've got to take revenge for this matter! The ruination of Imperial Hotel must have been a conspiracy between Haddock Group and ZZ Organization." Luigi saw red.

Some of Imperial Hotel's employees were still in the hospital then. Although they survived, injuries were inevitable.

"Since Dixon is luring us to Heavenly Waterfall Room, we'll play along with him. I'd like to see what he's up to." Ashlyn dipped her eyes before fixing her gaze on Luigi. "Instruct our men to remain calm. Then, spread the word that we also have a shipment of goods that we're selling at The Peacock on Saturday night."

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She then said, “I'm going to pick Lucas up. His treatment has probably ended.”

“Boss, Trashy Idol is going to have a celebratory party in a few days. Besides... as the investor and producer, you've got to attend the awards ceremony since it's been shortlisted for the Golden Ox Awards.”

Jared turned on his phone again, reporting the schedule to her like a secretary. “So... when are you planning to return to the country?”

Ashlyn peered at the man out of the corner of her eye. An indescribable tenderness showed on her beautiful face. “In another two days after Lucas' condition has stabilized.”

Sometime later, Ashlyn brought her car to a stop at the gates of the Leno residence.

Then, she climbed out of the car. A tall man was crouching in the small vegetable garden, watering the vegetables.

He wore a black shirt with the sleeves rolled up to his elbow, baring a small stretch of his strong and solid arms.

As he watered the vegetables while crouching with a water pipe in hand, he appeared pretty professional for some inexplicable reason.

It seems that he always looks at home in whatever he does. He's a mogul in the business world, yet he still looks as good holding a water pipe in the hand in which he usually holds a Montblanc pen.

Lifting her hand, Ashlyn rubbed her chin.

Perhaps it's because he's handsome, so he looks good no matter what he does?

After Lucas had watered the vegetables for a while, he seemingly sensed a thoughtful gaze on him. He lifted his eyes, meeting Ashlyn's gaze since she didn't manage to retract it in time.

Under the setting sun, Ashlyn's eyes glittered like crystals.

Lucas placed the water pipe in his hand down and turned off the faucet. Having done that, he strolled over to her and gazed down at her. "It's pretty nice to experience rural life once in a while."

Ashlyn's rosy lips curved into a smile. "Why, you want to retire so early, Mr. Nolan?"

"Nope."

Taking her creamy hand in his, Lucas started walking out with her. "How could I retire when I haven't made a fortune for you to spend?"

"Lucas, you haven't told me how you got the neighboring town's firefighters to work with you that day."

Ashlyn quirked a brow as she eyed the man's broad back.

All the firefighters on the plane Lucas piloted that day were those she asked Quiet Forest to seek out in the neighboring town.

"Then, you tell me who you sought out to get those firefighters to lend you a hand."

[Chapter 828](#)

Lucas' eyes brimmed with indulgence.

Someone who would step out at such a critical juncture and lend her a hand with just a single call must be very close to her. She's much too secretive.

"It was a man?" His gaze darkened a shade.

"Yeah, it was a man."

Exasperation swamped Ashlyn. Why did it end up being a question of gender now?

She hastily changed the subject. "I've got to return to the country in another two days, so I won't be able to continue keeping you company here."

"And so?" Lucas' eyes glinted dangerously.

In the past few days, they had been spending their time leisurely as though having been given a new lease on life.

It had been exceedingly relaxing.

"Nothing. I'm only to be away for a few days. Don't always be so childish, okay?" Ashlyn cradled her forehead as a headache assailed her.

Lucas went silent. Is she disdain me?

"Let's go and eat... Are you hungry?"

"I know of a pretty good restaurant."

Half an hour later, the car came to a steady stop in front of a high-end restaurant.

As soon as Ashlyn alighted from the car, Lucas took her hand and led her into the restaurant.

Ashlyn was struck dumb.

He's really getting increasingly domineering.

Mere moments after they had taken their seats, a woman's elegant voice sounded out of the blue.

"What a coincidence, Mr. Nolan."

Ashlyn cast her gaze in the direction of that voice, only to be greeted by the sight of a woman dressed in high-end customized clothes, her countenance striking and figure slender, standing in front of Lucas. Lucas' eyes brimmed with indulgence.

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With his face devoid of expression, Lucas swept a gaze over the woman. "Sorry, but I don't know you."

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A flash of surprise flitted across Kimberly's azure blue eyes.

Not only am I beautiful and gracious, but I've also got a noble background. All men scramble over at the sight of me. What right does he have to be so indifferent? And who's the woman beside him? Why does she seem to be incredibly intimate with him? I took the initiative to lower myself and greet him, yet he's being all high and mighty? Who does he think he is?

Suppressing the wrath within her, Kimberly inhaled deeply and maintained a decorous smile. "Mr. Nolan, we once met—"

Before she had finished speaking, Lucas cut her off, "Excuse me, miss, but you're disrupting me and my lover's meal by standing here. Could you please return to your seat?"

Slop! It was as though an invisible hand smacked Kimberly across the face.

Her face throbbed painfully.

I didn't hear him wrongly, did I? I'm the daughter of the oil tycoon and the most renowned socialite in the world, yet he's disrespecting me?

At the sight of her grim expression, Ashlyn stifled a bark of laughter. Withdrawing her gaze, she lowered her head and flipped open the menu. "What would you like to eat?"

"I like everything you order." Lucas gazed at her dotingly. At the end of the day, she's far more pleasing to the eye.

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As they conversed as though they were in a world of their own, Kimberly's temper spiked again.

I've never failed to obtain something I wanted! What gives that this man doesn't even spare me a glance? Great, just great. You've successfully snagged my attention!

She tilted her head up arrogantly. "One day, Lucas Nolan, you'll regret treating me in such a manner!"

After saying that, she whirled around and stalked off in her high heels, looking very much like a proud peacock from the back.

Ashlyn swept a gaze over Kimberly's high-end, customized attire. Her gaze promptly darkened.

She seems... rather different from women like Jenny and Penelope. The haughtiness in her bones appears innate in nature. Who is she?

She pondered for a while before shifting her gaze to Lucas. The man's expression remained the same. It was as though the woman's comings and goings had nothing to do with him.

"Verily, it's all too easy for you..."

"What's easy?" Lucas arched a brow.

The corners of Ashlyn's mouth turned up. She had a teasing look in her eyes, and her lovely countenance seemingly glowed under the light. "Attracting unwanted attention."

At that, Lucas burst into laughter. "Then, tell me why Winsor calls you several times a day."

"Why else? To apologize on behalf of his brother, of course!" Letting out an exhale, Ashlyn shot him a cold glare. "Why are you asking in such detail?"

[Chapter 829](#)

Lucas lowered his eyes and chuckled. "There's no woman calling me."

In response, Ashlyn glowered at him. "How childish!"

Regretfully, such leisure times seemed to pass in the blink of an eye.

Soon, it was time for Ashlyn to return to the country.

Right then, a storm was brewing in Lake City.

The sky was frightfully dark, as though the heavens would open anytime.

It was day, but it seemed as though night was dawning.

Early in the morning, Naomi went to Nolan Entertainment.

Since she had signed a contract with Jonathan's manager, she was naturally an artist under Nolan Entertainment as well.

She went right into Nolan Entertainment's exclusive vanity studio with Isaac.

The stylist had long since been waiting there. Precisely speaking, it was an hour ago.

Isaac wore a smug grin on his face. "You're simply stunning, Naomi! You'll definitely outshine all other female celebrities during the Golden Ox Awards tonight."

The stylist selected a simple yet elegant one-shoulder dress with silver sequins for Naomi, baring the creamy skin on the left half of her shoulder.

Tassels adorned the neckline and hem of the dress. They swayed with the wearer's movements, lending the sense of purity a hint of seductiveness.

She wore a pair of matching silver high heels of the same shade while her hair was pulled up high, leaving only a few strands beside her cheeks, appearing casual without being intentional.

Studying herself in the mirror, Naomi found it satisfactory. Lucas lowered his eyes and chuckled. "There's no women celling me."

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"Our company's new female celebrity certainly can't be overshadowed by anyone else, so I naturally have to work harder."

The stylist chuckled.

Isebel brought Neomi out of the vanity studio and headed straight for Jonethen's office.

Coincidentally, Isebel stepped out of the elevator and witnessed that scene. As she scrutinized Neomi's slender figure from the back, puzzlement glinted in her eyes. "The stylist gave Neomi the Moonlight dress?"

Her manager sneered and curled her lips in contempt. "It's just Moonlight. What's the big deal about it? Don't worry, for I borrowed the dress from Dior meant for the new spring collection next year. You'll definitely outshine everyone at that time. What's so great about Neomi? All she has going for her is her family background."

Isebel pursed her lips thoughtfully. Taking her eyes off Neomi, she glanced sideways at her manager, Nassy, with a soft smile on her face. "Nassy, I've been shortlisted for the Best Leading Actress and Most Popular Actress, so it all boils down to one's capabilities at that time. No matter which award I win in the end, my status in the company will undoubtedly surpass hers. So what if she's the heiress of Nolen Group?"

At once, a triumphant smile bloomed on Nassy's face. "Don't worry. Both the movie and television series in which you starred have been shortlisted for the Best Movie Award and Best Television Series Award, respectively. No matter which award you win then, you'll be able to gain popularity. She's just a rookie, so she's no threat to your position as the top female celebrity in the company."

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Smiling, Isabella twirled a strand of her long, wavy hair. "Mr. Nolan is always away from the office. With the distance, he won't be able to keep much of an eye on things. So what if she's an heiress? Ultimately, she's still my stepping stone."

"I heard she's been shortlisted for the Best New Artist Award. The judge in charge of that award loathes people who rely on their status and background. Yet, she's still shortlisted." Nesy gritted her teeth. Then, she continued, "She must have approached the judge and used her feminine wiles!"

Lizbeth Lacroix was an exceedingly upright judge, and she was also the vice president of the Film and Television Association.

"Well... Ms. Lacroix is a woman."

"Have you never heard the rumors? Ms. Lacroix is a tomboy. She likes beautiful women."

Isabella's eyes went wide. "Are you serious?"

There had been rumors regarding Lizbeth ages ago, for she always dressed meticulously and neutrally. Could it be that she actually likes women instead?

"Of course! Let's go. Just wait and see how I'm going to teach that b*tch, Naomi, a lesson. She even went as far as seducing Ms. Lacroix. What a vixen!"

White-hot fury blazed within Nussy. All who dare to block Isabella's path must get out of the way! They must all be gone!

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the red carpet opening ceremony for the Golden Ox Awards of the Film and Television Awards Ceremony officially commenced.

[Chapter 830](#)

At the entrance of the Lake City Convention and Exhibition Center, not even the muggy weather could dampen the enthusiasm of the fans.

Cheers resounded alongside the appearance of the celebrities.

On the red carpet, cameras flashed.

Celebrities walked the red carpet one after another, leaving behind a perfect figure under the limelight.

This was a grand event in the film and television industry. Likewise, it was significant in showbiz.

Almost all media within and outside the country were present. Both media personnel and celebrities walking the red carpet were in high spirits.

While Frank's movie, Angel and Devil, wasn't much of a hit and was only nominated for an inconspicuous award, Talon still came with the main film crew.

After all, those in showbiz naturally weren't willing to miss any opportunity to show their faces in public.

Frank might have gone to prison, but the others were still walking free.

They still walked the red carpet in glamorous dresses while having their photos taken.

Taking the hand of the main film crew, Talon walked the red carpet with them from beginning to end.

The leading actress, Sandra Wagner, wore a snowy-white dress with a cinched waist. After Helena gave the role up, it fell on her though she was only a small-time actress.

It's my first time playing the leading actress, but Naomi, who's also a new leading actress in a movie that premiered at the same time, enjoys far greater popularity. That aside, her movie was a huge box-office hit. Worse still, she's been nominated for the Best New Artist Award for the Golden Ox Awards this time. Argh! The mere thought of it enrages me. Contrarily, I'm only cannon fodder who doesn't get much attention.

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Taking the head of the main film crew, Telon walked the red carpet with them from beginning to end.

The leading actress, Sindre Wegner, wore a snowy-white dress with a cinched waist. After Helene gave the role up, it fell on her though she was only a small-time actress.

It's my first time playing the leading actress, but Neomi, who's also a new leading actress in a movie that premiered at the same time, enjoys far greater popularity. That aside, her movie was a huge box-office hit. Worse still, she's been nominated for the Best New Artist Award for the Golden Ox Awards this time. Argh! The mere thought of it enrages me. Contrarily, I'm only cannon fodder who doesn't get much attention.

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When she had finished walking the red carpet, she still felt rather unsatisfied.

This is my first time attending such a grand event. Who knows when I'll get to walk the red carpet next time?

Subsequently, the cars driving the celebrities from Nolen Entertainment arrived at the entrance of the red carpet, one after another.

The first car was the main crew of Trashy Idol, starring Neomi and Jonethen. Greg was the first person to climb out of the car.

Next was Jonethen, who then gentlemanly opened the car door for Neomi.

Just when Neomi had alighted from the car, a girl suddenly rushed out of nowhere and charged toward her.

Following the sound of a splash, Neomi felt a chill at her chest. Black liquid trickled down her silver dress.

The girl held a bottle of Cola in her hand and glared at her resentfully. "You vixen, seducing my Jonethen! What right do you have to be with him?"

While tearing into Neomi, she raised the bottle and swung it at the latter's face.

No sooner said than done, Jonethen, who was closest to Neomi, rushed forward and shielded her.

The resentment within her intensified as her thoughts continued in that line.

When she had finished walking the red carpet, she still felt rather unsatisfied.

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Subsequently, the cars driving the celebrities from Nolan Entertainment arrived at the entrance of the red carpet, one after another.

The first car was the main crew of Trashy Idol, starring Naomi and Jonathan. Greg was the first person to climb out of the car.

Next was Jonathan, who then gentlemanly opened the car door for Naomi.

Just when Naomi had alighted from the car, a girl suddenly rushed out of nowhere and charged toward her.

Following the sound of a splash, Naomi felt a chill at her chest. Black liquid trickled down her silver dress.

The girl held a bottle of Cola in her hand and glared at her resentfully. "You vixen, seducing my Jonathan! What right do you have to be with him?"

While tearing into Naomi, she raised the bottle and swung it at the latter's face.

No sooner said than done, Jonathan, who was closest to Naomi, rushed forward and shielded her.

Bam!

The bottle hit Jonathan's back hard. Naomi, on the other hand, burrowed into his arms in embarrassment.

That sudden turn of events shocked everyone.

In no time, some media started snapping away at Naomi and Jonathan.

Greg hurriedly called for security to restrain the crazed fan.

In the past two years, there had been no lack of crazed fans who lost themselves in pursuing celebrities. Previously, there had been shocking cases of crazed male fans throwing themselves at female celebrities or hugging them in public.

After Naomi and Jonathan starred alongside each other in the movie, especially, they appeared very much like a couple. Although that wasn't used as a promotional means by the movie, many fans shipped them together.

Despite the presence of those fans, there were also some fans who objected to it. Jonathan, in particular, had a ton of groupies who wanted to be his girlfriend and wife.

Never had Naomi expected that she would be attacked by Jonathan's fan.

Worse still, it was at such a grand event as the Golden Ox Awards, humiliating her before the entire country.

My dress is ruined! What should I do now? Should I still walk the red carpet or not?

Behind them, Isabella and Nesy had already alighted from the car. Isabella hastened over with a mask of concern on her face. "Oh my God! What happened, Ms. Nolan? How did your dress get ruined?"